



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy No.: DOC 5.1.6	Subject: WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION CREWS
Chapter 5: OFFENDER PROGRAMS	Page 1 of 8
Section 1: Work Programs	Revision Date:
Signature: /s/ Bill Slaughter	Effective Date: July 2, 2001

I. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Department of Corrections to authorize the selection, training, supervision and development of Offender Wildland Fire Suppression programs for secure care facilities.

II. IMPLEMENTATION:

This policy will be implemented immediately upon Director signature.

III. AUTHORITY:

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938

MCA 53-1-203 Powers and Duties of the Department of Corrections

DOC 1.2.9, Contracts

DOC 1.3.7, Compensatory Time and Overtime

DOC 1.3.40, Time Keeping

DOC 5.1.2, Offender Pay

DOC 5.1.3, Adult Offender Participation in a Community Work Program

IV. DEFINITIONS:

Contracting Agency means the Department of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management.

DOC ID Number means the Department of Corrections identification number assigned to each offender, previously referenced as the AO number.

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V. PROCEDURES:

Prior to the development and deployment of a wild land suppression crew, the Warden/Superintendent/Facility Administrator will develop specific procedures that address all of the following areas.

A. Offender Screening, Selection, Training and Supervision

The selection of offenders who have demonstrated records of good institutional behavior will be a major emphasis in the hiring process. Selection will address the visibility of the offender in the community and the potential negative repercussions of behavior or security problems. Selection will always ensure public and staff safety.

1. Participating facilities must have a DOC approved process for the application and screening of offenders being considered for the wild land fire suppression crew.
 - a. The screening process must meet the criteria established in DOC Policy 5.1.3, Adult Offender Participation in a Community Work Program.
 - b. The application and screening process must be ongoing to ensure a current list of eligible offenders for the assignment.
 - c. Physical fitness standards and medical screening must be included to meet the criteria of the contracting agency.
2. Participating facilities will establish training and testing schedules based on a standard wild land fire-fighting curriculum that is in accordance with contracting agency requirements.
3. Participating facilities will establish a fair and equitable offender compensation plan in cooperation with the contracting agency. The compensation plan will comply with DOC Policy 5.1.2, Offender Pay.
4. Offenders convicted of a sex offense, arson, or kidnapping will not be eligible.

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5. There will be an established process by which to document inappropriate offender behavior and/or by which to remove an offender from the crew for such behavior.
6. Offenders will not under any circumstances be allowed to cross State lines. The contracting agency will not send any Wildland Fire Suppression Crew out of the state, nor out of the country.
7. Offenders will not use any equipment unless specifically trained in the use of the equipment. There will be documentation of all training regarding safety procedures, equipment, tools or specialized issues required by the contracting agency.
8. A method of evaluation for each offender will be developed by the participating facility. An evaluation will be completed after each deployment.

B. Staff Screening, Selection, Training and Timekeeping

When selecting staff the Warden/Superintendent/Facility Administrator must consider the special skills and abilities required for participation in this type of program, including the following:

1. Notice to staff of position availability will include eligibility requirements, qualifications and criteria for the position:
 - training and physical fitness requirements;
 - schedule of on and off duty assignment and on call expectations;
 - security experience and certification requirements;
 - compensation;
 - the ability to provide positive communication with the offenders and the contracting agency; and
 - the ability to understand, communicate and enforce emergency procedures for any situation, including escapes, medical emergencies, and evacuations.

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2. A documented formal screening process will be established that is fair and equitable. The screening process will include:
 - subjective application review;
 - supplemental questions;
 - personal interview;
 - a review of written criteria; and
 - physical fitness testing standards.

3. The staff training program will include:
 - security and job safety requirements;
 - contraband controls;
 - offender drug and alcohol testing;
 - medical and emergency procedures; and
 - any additional training required by the contracting agency.

4. The procedure for documenting regular scheduled work time and overtime will be in accordance with:
 - DOC Policy 1.3.40, Time Keeping;
 - DOC Policy 1.3.7, Compensatory Time and Overtime; and
 - any existing Bargaining Unit agreements.

5. Staff must be given clear instructions regarding expectations for behavior during resting status, including:
 - leaving the fire camp site;
 - attending to personal business or phone calls; and
 - the use or possession of alcohol or drugs when on call or at a resting status, including prescription drugs.

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C. Offender Property, Mail, Telephone Use and Visits

Each facility will establish a list of all property that the offender will be allowed to possess while training or deployed. Each facility will address the sending and receiving of mail and telephone calls and the expectations of visiting while the offender is participating in Wildland Fire Suppression Programs.

D. Offender Discipline

Each facility will develop a standard set of rules for participation. Rules should include at a minimum:

- behavior at the fire camp and in training;
- appropriate boundaries and communications with contracting agency staff;
- prohibition of fraternization;
- curfews; and
- offender accountability through disciplinary action or removal from the crew.

E. Counts

Participating facilities will develop procedures that allow for a minimum of four formal counts during each 24 hour period. Count schedules will be in accordance with the supervising facility's count schedule so that counts are called into the facility at the regularly scheduled count times.

F. Record keeping

Participating facilities will maintain a record of all deployments, to include at a minimum the following:

1. the name and DOC ID Number;
2. the name of the supervising officer(s);
3. the destination of the team;
4. the time of departure and return to the facility;
5. the mode of travel and identification of vehicle license number;

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6. the type of voice communication to the facility and the call sign of the vehicle or that of the contracting agency;
7. the time of arrival at the destination;
8. the time of departure to other work sites and/or return from other work sites;
9. any unscheduled stops or incidents while en route to or from the fire scene;
10. the time, location and results of all counts;
11. a record of all call-ins to the facility;
12. a brief description of the day's activities to document team attitude, illness, injuries, disciplinary actions, security concerns, or any unusual activities; and
13. all notifications to local law enforcement agencies.

G. Communications

1. Staff supervising the Wild Land Fire Suppression Crew must have communications capabilities with the participating facility by radio or land line. This communication may be either direct or indirect, through the contracting agency or through local law enforcement agencies.
2. Each staff member accompanying the Wild Land Fire Suppression Crew must be equipped with a hand held radio capable of contacting the facility, law enforcement agencies or the contracting agency base camp. Back up battery supplies must be adequate to ensure uninterrupted contact.
3. At least one cell phone with extra batteries should accompany the supervisor while on duty. Under no circumstances will cell phones be available to any offender.
4. No offender will be allowed to access any Department communication equipment. If an offender must be issued a radio during operations, then the supervising staff member must ensure that the radio does not have available frequencies that could compromise the security of the facility, other

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crew members, Department personnel, contracting agency personnel, local law enforcement or the public.

H. Transportation and Offender Access to Vehicles

1. All state or contracting agency vehicles accompanying or transporting the fire crews must be equipped with a hi-band radio capable of communicating either with the facility, local law enforcement or the contracting agency base camp or headquarters.
2. No offender will be allowed to operate a motor vehicle while on duty except in the case of an emergency when there is no other alternative to prevent the loss of life.

I. Dispatch and Deployment

Participating facilities will develop procedures in conjunction with the contracting agency to address the call-out, dispatch and deployment of the Wild Land Fire Suppression Crew.

J. Supervision

The participating facility must develop procedures to ensure the 24 hour supervision of offenders. This may be accomplished by a cooperative effort involving facility relief staff, the contracting agency, local law enforcement, Department personnel and/or through private security agencies. In all cases, the relief and supervision plan must be documented and must address expectations for relief staff, how counts will be conducted, the rules for the offender crew and how to respond to all emergency situations.

K. Notifications

At all times, the local Sheriff of the county where the crew is deployed must be apprised of the following:

- where the crew is stationed and where the crew will be working

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- names of all offenders on the crew; and
- any other information requested by the Sheriff's Department

L. Contracts

The participating facility must ensure that a contract exists between the facility and the contracting agency prior to deployment of a crew. All such contracts must be processed in accordance with Department Policy 1.2.9, Contracts.

VI. **CLOSING:**

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Warden/Superintendent/Facility Administrator or Contract Placement Bureau Chief.